







# SWARĀJ SĀSTRA

[ THE PRINCIPLES OF A NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL ORDER ]

*By*  
VINOBA BHAVE

TRANSLATED BY

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## WHO IS VINOBA BHAVE ?

By M. K. GANDHI

He is an undergraduate having left college after my return to India in 1916. He is a Sanskrit scholar. He joined the Ashram almost at its inception. He was among the first members. In order to better qualify himself he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit. And practically at the same hour at which he had left the Ashram a year before, he walked into it without notice. I had forgotten that he was due to arrive that day. He has taken part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking. Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which he has specialised as very few have. He believes in universal spinning being the central activity which will remove the poverty in the villages and put life into their deadness. Being a born teacher he has been of the utmost assistance to Ashadevi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts. Sri Vinoba has produced a text-book

taking spinning as the handicraft. It is original in conception. He has made scoffers realise that spinning is the handicraft par excellence which lends itself to being effectively used for basic education. He has revolutionised *takli* spinning and drawn out its hitherto unknown possibilities. For perfect spinning probably he has no rival in all India.

He has abolished every trace of untouchability from his heart. He believes in communal unity with the same passion that I have. . In order to know the best mind of Islam he gave one year to the study of the Quran in the original. He therefore learnt Arabic. He found this study necessary for cultivating a living contact with the Muslims living in his neighbourhood.

He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding. He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers. Though an utter stranger to medicine this worker has by singular devotion mastered the method of treatment of lepers and is now running several clinics for their care. Hundreds owe their cure to his labours. He has now published a handbook in Marathi for the treatment of lepers. Vinoba was for years Director of the Mahila Ashram (an Ashram for women) in Wardha. His devotion to the cause

of Daridranarayan (the God of the poor) took him first to a village near Wardha, and now he has gone still further and lives in Pavnar, five miles from Wardha, from where he has established contact with villagers through the disciples he has trained.

He believes in the necessity of the political independence of India. He is an accurate student of history. But he believes that real independence of the villagers is impossible without the constructive programme of which khadi (hand-spun, handwoven cloth) is the centre. He believes that the charkha (spinning wheel) is the most equitable outward symbol of non-violence which has become an integral part of his life. He has taken an active part in the previous Satyagraha (non-violent civil disobedience) campaigns. He has never been in the limelight on the political platform. With many co-workers he believes that silent constructive work with civil disobedience in the background is far more effective than the already heavily crowded political platform. And he thoroughly believes that non-violent resistance is impossible without a heart belief in and practice of construction work.

*[The above was published in the 'Harijan' of October 20, 1940. It was written by Gandhiji to*



*introduce to the public Sri Vinoba Bhave, whom he had chosen, as the best representative on non-violent civil resistance to war. Sri Vinoba was to start the campaign of individual civil disobedience, and in the first instance it was to be confined to him only.—TRANSLATOR.]*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Few English readers are acquainted with Sri Vinoba Bhave; for though he knows English well, whatever he has written has been in Marathi, his mother tongue. Besides, he is of a retiring disposition which leads him to bury himself in some remote village, trying to put into practice his gospel of non-violence.

He belongs to Konkan in the Bomabay Presidency, was brought up in Baroda, and while still in his teens, after two years of college, left in for Banaras in 1916 in quest of religious truth. In Politics he was a revolutionary; but his religious bent made him a revolutionary of the non-violent type. This drew him to Gandhiji in whose Ashram at Sabarmati he remained till 1921, when with a handful of other young men he started a branch of the Sabarmati Ashram at Wardha. During the last few years when not in jail for political reasons, he has been conducting an Ashram of his own a few miles from Wardha and organising village work in the neighbourhood. He was

forced into the limelight in 1940 when Gandhiji launched his individual Civil Disobedience Movement and chose him to start it off as the first war-resister. Gandhiji then described him as the ideal Satyagrahi, or one who came nearest to embodying in his own life and thought the ideal of non-violence. The views developed in this booklet may, therefore, be regarded as representing the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence in the realm of political theory.

At a time when nations are excelling each other in violence and hoping thus to establish democracy, the four freedoms, international brotherhood and what not, this little book indicates briefly that the way to peace, brotherhood, true democracy and human happiness lies in an entirely different direction. Its message is one that comes from the heart of ancient India and represents its true genius, *viz.* the teaching and practice of non-violence. But it is here applied to indicate in the light of a brief review of modern forms of Government, the lines along which political life should be organised if it were truly animated by the spirit of non-violence. This is adumbrated in the third and succeeding chapters which thus form the most important part of the book. The third chapter is also of special interest as laying bare the

principles underlying Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement or non-co-operation and Satyagraha.

The author brings to his task deep learning a capacity to penetrate to essentials, freshness of thought, minute application to detail whether in theory or in the technique of hand-labour, integrity of character, a disciplined life of service and sacrifice, and a fervent devotion to religion—a combination so rare today and yet so essential if men are to be called away from the certain destruction to which Politics divorced from religion is fast leading them.

This booklet was originally written in Marathi by the author, and translated into Hindi by Dada S. T. Dharmadhikari. In the work of translation from Hindi I have received the help of the latter as well as that of Sri Gopalrao Kale, an intimate friend and colleague of the author. Both of them, as fellow political prisoners with me in Nagpur Jail, helped to check up my English translation from day to day with the Marathi original. I have since been able to have translation revised and approved by the author himself. In translating into an altogether foreign language like English, it is impossible to give a word for word rendering, without making the sense almost unintelligible. I

have therefore tried while closely adhering to the language of the author to translate his ideas rather than his actual words.

1945

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since Gandhiji's death in 1948, Vinoba has come into great prominence, so much so that it seems ridiculous now to ask : Who is Vinoba Bhave ? He is becoming a bye-word in India and has come to be known throughout the world. Gandhiji became world-famous chiefly because of his application of non-violence in the political sphere. That task having found fruition in our attainment of political independence, Vinoba is concentrating on Gandhiji's experiments with non-violence in the economic sphere and is seeking to obtain land for the millions of landless cultivators of India, not by the sword or by compulsion but by an appeal to the reason and conscience of the landowner. His Bhoodan-Yajna ( or Land Gifts mission ), whereby since 1951 when he started it, he has been able to secure hundreds of thousands of acres of land for distribution among the landless reads like an epic. Vinoba's idea is not thus merely to obtain land for the landless but to rebuild the economic life of the village and therefore

of the country, in such a way that our people will co-operate with each other as members of a family and make themselves self-dependent in small groups for all their essential requirements. For this according to him is the fundamental economic basis of Swaraj or non-violent self-government. Those who are struck today by the success of Vinoba's Land Gifts mission will through this book gain some idea of the depth of philosophical thought and insight into non-violence that underlie this epoch-making movement.

*26th January, 1955.*

BHARATAN KUMARAPPA

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE MARATHI EDITION

These few jottings on the principles of self-government, which were originally conceived in Nagpur Jail, are here put together in a slightly amended form. I must admit that if Sri Biyani had not affectionately insisted on my dictating to him, making himself my scribe, this booklet would most probably not have taken shape at least for the present.

Government (Rajya) is one thing; Self-government (Swarajya) is another. Government can be had through violence. Self-government is impossible without non-violence. So the thoughtful do not want government but urge people to strive for self-government. The following two classical lines from Sanskrit, "I do not desire to govern", "Let us strive for self-government" become their negative and positive political slogans.

Swarajya is a term in Vedic language. It is defined thus : Swarajya is the government of each by each, *i.e.*, it is such a government that it will seem to each to be his own rule, or government by all, or Ramrajya (Kingdom of God).



The science of self-government is evergrowing. Its systems are ever-changing according to time and place. But its fundamental principles are eternal. It is on the basis of these eternal principles that the outline here presented has been made. They allow of as much expansion as we please. Entrusting that task to the future to be done according to the capacity and the needs of that time, I may stop here for the present.

VINOBA

*2nd February, 1942.*

*Nalvadi*

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# SWARĀJ ŚĀSTRA

[ The Principles of a Non-violent Political Order ]

## CHAPTER I

*Question* : How many and of what kinds are the theories and forms of political organisation prevailing in the world today ?

*Answer* : 1. *The problem of politics.*

First of all, we may consider how many kinds of political theories are possible in the abstract. As compared with them, those, that are actually existent today may be either less or the same in number. They cannot be more. But to answer the question how many forms of political organisation are possible we must first define what we mean by political organisation.

If there had been only one man in the world, the question of political organisation would never have arisen. The problem before him would have been only how far and in what way he should use the material world around him for maintaining his life. But since man does not exist thus as single individual but only in a group, besides the material

problem of subduing nature and sustaining life, he is faced also with the social problem of establishing orderly relationships with his fellows. This second problem is as important as the first, and it is this second problem that gives rise to what is called Politics or the science of political organisation.

The first question which arises in regard to the establishment for orderly mutual relationships between man and man is as to how material goods, i.e., land and other forms of wealth, are to be divided amongst people. And the next question is how in their dealing with each other men are to achieve the greatest amount of mental equanimity or satisfaction. The first question is usually spoken of as political, and the second as social. But these two cannot be entirely separated one from the other. So in the end, on a broad consideration, both may be regarded as included in Politics. In short, then, Politics may be defined as a science dealing with the organisations or arrangements between themselves of a group or groups of people.

## *2. Prevalent Artificial Treatment of Political Problems.*

(a) Today human society is arbitrarily divided into three classes—upper, middle and lower, and

Politics is then thought to be concerned with the problem of bringing about some adjustment between these three classes. Thus an artificial meaning is given to political enquiry.

(b) Again, in Hindu Society, people are arbitrarily divided into castes in accordance with their occupations, and Politics is regarded as concerned with establishing an adjustment between these castes. This too is an artificial treatment.

(c) Similarly, some people in this world have too much wealth while others have little or none. Taking this fact into consideration, it is supposed that there are two classes of people, namely the rich and the poor, and Politics is thought of as concerned with the task of establishing some adjustment between these two classes. This again is an artificial treatment.

We call these three modes of treatment artificial because they are based on arbitrary or non-fundamental distinctions. Upper, lower and middle are purely arbitrary. Castes, whether they be three or four or more, are of our own making. Therefore any theory of organisation based on them is also arbitrary in the sense that even if they are related to facts, still they are certainly not fundamental. Similarly, though it may be difficult to say that the difference between rich and poor is arbitrary, we cannot regard that distinction as



fundamental. That is, it does not belong to the very nature of things, but is merely the effect of special circumstances. Thus if we call the wealthy wealthy because of money, and the poor poor for lack of it, the poor can, on the contrary, be said to be wealthy from the point of view of capacity for labour, and those called wealthy today can with reference to their capacity for labour be said to be poor. Thus 'wealthy' and 'poor' alike are merely arbitrary distinctions.

In addition to distinctions of these three kinds, differences in language or religion also give rise to political problems. But a little reflection suffices to show that even these distinctions are not fundamental.

### 3. *The Natural Meaning of the Political Problem.*

Then in what way should we conceive of an arrangement of human society which will be fundamental and natural ?

Some individuals are by their very nature very intelligent or physically very strong, and obversely others are less intelligent or less strong. Both intelligence and physical strength can be equally included in the word, capacity. All those things which we call wealth, its means, status in life etc. arise from capacity, so that it is possible to conceive of people as falling according to their nature

into two categories, a few capable and the rest incapable.

If these are to materialise into classes, they would have to organise themselves. If all the capable individuals are to form a class, they would have to unite into an organisation. Otherwise to call them a class is arbitrary. Similarly, if the incapable combine, only then can they form a class. But such a class will commit suicide in its very formation, for it will not any more remain incapable but become capable; for as capacity arises from physical strength and intelligence, it arises also from numbers. If, however, it fails to become organised, it will be purely arbitrary to regard it as a class.

In short, there are no natural classes in human society. There are only individuals who are less or more capable. How these less or more capable individuals should join together to manage their affairs is the fundamental and natural subject of Political Science. With this as base, it is possible to raise other problems which are non-essential and imaginary; and when such problems have been raised it becomes necessary to solve them.

#### 4. *Three Natural Types of Government.*

There will be three natural forms of administration :

(a) A wise or capable individual may administer for all ;

(b) More than one wise or capable individual may join together to administer for all ; and

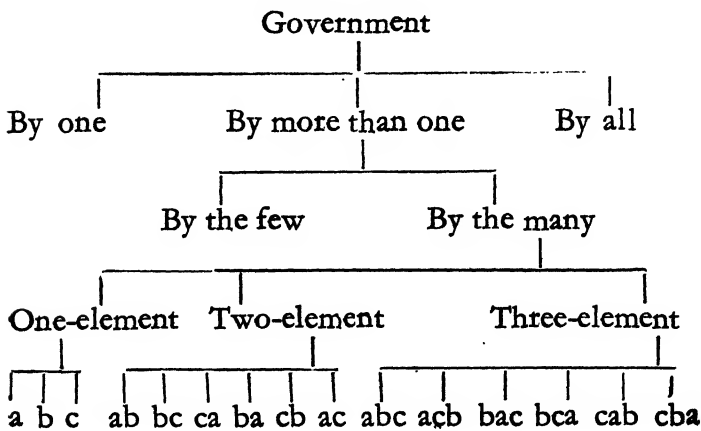
(c) All the people may combine and equally share in the responsibility of carrying on their own administration. We may call these three types 'rule by one', 'rule by more than one', and 'rule by all'.

### 5. *Possible forms of the above Three Types of Government.*

Although ultimately only these three types can exist, still sub-divisions of them may arise, some natural and others artificial or arbitrary, based on circumstances which must needs be taken into account. 'Rule by one' and 'rule by all' represent the two extremes, and therefore they can be of one form only. But 'rule by more than one' can give rise to several forms. It has two natural divisions—'rule by the few' and 'rule by the many'. The many are the masses devoted to labour, but blessed with only a little, wealth, strength or learning. They are generally of the same type everywhere and at all times. So rule by them is of one kind only. But of the other, viz. 'rule by the few', several forms are possible. In essence, it may exist in three forms, as rule by

the learned, rule by the armed, or rule by the rich. Or any two of these may combine to set up a government when we shall have three forms, rule by the learned-armed, armed-rich, and rich-learned. Or according to comparative importance of the two elements, three more forms are possible, viz. armed-learned, rich-armed, and learned-rich. Thus in all six two-element governments arise. In the same way, from the original one-element forms through combination and comparative importance of one or other of them, we get six three-element forms such as learned-armed-rich, etc. This exhausts all the possibilities.

In this way there are in all eighteen forms which we may represent thus :—



6. *All other forms included in essence in the above.*

In theory it is not possible to have more than those eighteen forms of Government. Governments based on colour, e.g., the whites over the coloured, caste Hindus over non-caste Hindus ; on race, e.g., Christians over Jews ; on nationality, e.g., England over India ; on citizenship, e.g., ancient Rome over the world of that time ; and many other such forms of government appear under different names. But in essence all of them will find a place in one or other of the eighteen forms mentioned above.

## II

7. *'Rule by all' nowhere existent : Its Form.*

It is perfectly obvious that 'rule by all' does not exist anywhere today. Gandhiji is striving towards it and has evolved a method for it which he desires to experiment with in India.

There is of course a form of government which, assuming the name of rule by the people, and the outward appearance of such rule, masquerades in Europe and America. But a government which is based on violence, even though it may pretend to work on the principle of 'one man one vote', is really not rule by all.

As against this, if the people join together and of their free will, and after deliberation, invest with power one or more of themselves, whom they know to be free from attachment and hatred, devoted to the welfare of all, and wise and capable, than though that Government may in form be 'rule by one' or 'rule by more than one', still if it is based on non-violence it should in reality be regarded as 'rule by all'.

The old Panchayat\* rule in India may be said to be a somewhat imperfect but honest attempt in this direction. But in the absence of any co-ordinating arrangement between the various Panchayats that attempt must be regarded as unscientific, and inadequate for our present-day needs.

It is enough to say that at this time 'rule by all' does not exist anywhere, and it has to be established in the future.

#### 8. 'Rule by one' continues till today : Its Form.

'Rule by one' has existed from the beginning till now. Our Indian States may be regarded as examples of it familiar to us. As compared with the autocracy and pride of the first founders of these states, the despotism and arrogance of those who

\* Panchayat is government of the village by an Executive Council of about five village elders.

succeed them in lineal descent as Rajahs is often much worse. The original founder has to acquire his possessions, and therefore whether he wishes to or not he has to seek the co-operation of many others. But those who come after him feel no such responsibility and so can afford to become very irresponsible, even as the proverb puts it, the sand is hotter than the Sun. 'Rule by one' in one form or another exists of course also in some other parts of the world.

9. *'Rule by the few' : Its Present Forms.*

Some forms of 'rule by the few' are gaining strength in Europe and other places. Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism are all in greater or less degree nothing but forms of 'rule by the few'. Violence, mechanisation, accumulation of capital plans for large-scale production are their weapons. While acting violently they continually proclaim that it is all for non-violence. Since it is necessary to keep the many under control, fine slogans regarding their welfare are put forward off and on. Between the rulers and ruled, move and counter-move involving violence are ever on the increase. The whole edifice rests on the assumption that the many cannot have orderly government but for the administration of the few. As long as the

many remain ignorant and weak, so that they submit to such an assumption, these forms of government are inevitable in one form or the other.

10. '*Rule by the many*': *The Russian Experiment*.

As over against these forms, Russia as though by a blind zeal has launched on an experiment of 'Rule by the many'. But violence on which the experiment rests can never be a weapon of the greater part of society. Therefore the Russian experiment has turned out in reality to be a case of 'rule by the few', viz. by a combination of the armed, the learned and the wealthy. The policy of Stalin seems to provide testimony to this truth. Whatever has been gained by the sword has also to be retained by the sword. The success of the experiment therefore depends on the government being well equipped with arms on a vast scale, as is happening today. The rulers find it necessary to get the masses to take up arms. But as the masses are naturally incapable of wielding arms, they become per force dependent on the few who are experts in this sphere. This whole business of organising defence requires as its necessary pre-requisite accumulation of wealth and the science of diplomacy. Accordingly such



a government cannot remain a case of 'rule by the many'. It will, however, continue so long as it appears to the many to be beneficial to them.

We have called the present experiment rule of the armed, the learned, and the rich ; but as in the case of the three Gunas of the Sankhya Philosophy, it is difficult to say which of these three—learning, arms or riches—will predominate, when and to what degree. So in brief, perhaps only this much can be said with certainty that it was started honestly for the benefit of the many, but actually it is only a new form of experiment in 'rule by the few'.

By a 'new form' we do not mean some new type over and above those which we have enumerated. We mean only one of the forms already enumerated but which perhaps has never before been put into effect. Considering that man has had a history of thousands of years it cannot be said for certain that such an experiment never took place formerly. The wheel of man's ideas has a way of going round and round over familiar ground but always with the feeling that it is traversing over tracks entirely new and previously unknown. When a mother brings forth a child she is so full of joy and enthusiasm that she imagines that no mother till then had such a child.

Such then briefly is a description of the number and kinds of the prevailing forms of government and currents of political thought that there are in the world.

## CHAPTER II

*Question* : You have explained all this theoretically.

But tell us clearly from a practical point of view about Nazism, Fascism and Socialism as they exist today. Of these political forms which is the best ?

*Answer* : 11. *The people as wedded to life : and forms of Government as Instrument to life.*

From a theoretical view point we enumerated in all eighteen forms of Government, i.e., the four chief forms, rule by one, rule by the few, rule by the many and rule by all, and together with those the sub-divisions of rule by the few. Nevertheless in all of them there is an undoubted common factor which if we keep in mind we shall be able to understand clearly the differences between the prevailing theories and forms of Government. Even if Government by a particular king is purely personal, still his rule is really not entirely his. He obtains the co-operation of a clique and also more or less the co-operation of the masses. Without such co-operation his government cannot be carried

on. As against this, it is not true that in what is called rule by all, the people themselves carry on the administration. Even when the government has the co-operation of all, the actual work of administration is entrusted to a few people, and even of them some one individual has necessarily to be regarded as the final authority. The people are not wedded to theories or forms of government. They are concerned only with life. Provided life goes on smoothly for them, they do not worry, whatever be the theory or system of government under which they live. Theorists produce theories of government, and practical men devise systems of government, and the people give their co-operation. Theorists and practical men are wedded to theories and forms of government respectively. But even they are in the last analysis wedded to life according to their own lights, for it is because of their desire to make a fuller life possible that they become attached to a theory or a form of government. The theorist believes that except through his theory life cannot be lived well, and therefore it is precisely because of his desire for a good life that he becomes attached to his theory. Similarly, the practical man concludes his experience that without such and such a system of government life cannot be lived

well. So just because of his desire for making a good life possible he becomes wedded to a system of government. But at times the motive for life is set aside because of the obstinacy and fanaticism of theorists and practical men, and for a while mere adherence to a theory or to a system of government takes possession of the minds of men.

12. *The four common factors in all forms of government.*

The following should be regarded as elements common under all conditions to all theories and forms of government and administrations.

(a) *Aim to serve life.*—May find expression in reality or only in outward appearance ; may conduce to life for all time or at any rate for the time being may serve life in all places or only locally.

(b) *Co-operation of the people.*—May be given voluntarily (with full knowledge or tacitly) ; or may be obtained by force when the co-operation may be either complete or just sufficient to carry on the administration.)

(c) *Administration by capable individuals.*—Who may be either elected or nominated, or who have on their own initiative banded themselves for the purpose.

(d) *With one individual as the final authority.*—Who may be appointed (directly or indirectly) by

all, or by the many, or by the few or who may be self-appointed.

13. *Various qualities attaching to these four common factors.*

Why is there controversy over the various forms and theories of government when there is so much in common between all of them ? Why are there revolutions and changes in administration ? Where is the need for comparing forms of government with each other, and on what basis can such comparison be made ? The answer to all these questions is but one and is found in the adjectives with which we have qualified the common elements while we were explaining them above.

(a) *Aim to serve life.*—(1) If the life aimed at is purely local, then it comes into conflict with the aim of other localities of life, and such a conflicting aim cannot survive. It, therefore, perishes and gives rise to a new system of government. (2) If the aim is to serve life only of the moment, i.e., if it is not far-sighted, then its speed like that of a football that has been kicked becomes gradually less and it requires fresh impetus to be given to it. (3) If the aim to serve life exists only outwardly, i.e., in appearance, then it will work only as long as the spell of outward show lasts.

(b) *Co-operation of the people.*—(1) If the co-operation is by compulsion, the government will manage to conduct its affairs only so long as the people are not alive to the situation and are not capable. (2) In spite of compulsion if the government conduces more or less to the happiness of the people, it will last comparatively longer than in the previous case. (3) In rule based on compulsion, if the skilful ruling class can contrive by means of a bad system of education or no education at all, to prevent the people from becoming awakened, the government can last still longer. (4) Even if the government does not secure for its people their primary requirements, if it can put up a show of meeting at least some of their secondary requirements, it is possible that people will more or less get reconciled to it. But there is no doubt that some time or other such a government must come to an end. (5) Even when the co-operation is given voluntarily, if it is not given with full knowledge, but only tacitly, the government will last only as long as there is no tampering with the loyalty of the people.

(c) *Administration by capable individuals.*—The administration will always be in the hands of capable individuals. But (1) if they are elected, their tenure of office will depend on their capacity to

rule well. (2) If they are appointed, they will remain in office only so long as the people are not capable or so long as there is no internal split among these individuals. (3) If they have combined of their own accord they will continue comparatively longer. But in the absence of support from the people a combination by themselves of capable individuals cannot last long, for often between capable individuals mutual jealousy arises on account of their abilities.

(d) *The individual with supreme authority*.—(1) If he is self-appointed, his government will remain only so long as he himself, or his valour or his influence does not come to an end. (2) If he is elected, his government will last in proportion as his electorate is wide, steady and free.

#### 14. *Non-opposition and brotherhood between nations.*

While considering political organisations it is necessary to draw attention to a very important matter in addition to those mentioned above, viz. the question of how far besides orderly relationships within the nation, there is mutual non-opposition between nations. Even in ancient times when means of communication were not so swift as today, this question was considered very important while today of course not only non-opposition between nations but also helpfulness



and brotherhood have to be regarded as the fundamental basis of both national and international relationships.

### 15. *Political Ideals.*

By way of a brief summing up, we may lay down some principles in the light of which forms of government may be tested. (a) International brotherhood ; (b) Co-operation of all the elements of a nation, a co-operation given with full knowledge, to the best of one's ability, spontaneous and springing from one's heart ; (c) Unity of interests as between the capable few and the masses in general ; (d) Regard for all-sided and equal development of every member of society ; (e) The most extensive distribution of governmental power ; (f) The least amount of governing ; (g) The simplest governmental machinery ; (h) The lowest administrative expenditure ; (i) The smallest organisation for defence ; (j) Spread of knowledge everywhere uninterrupted, and unbiased, or free in the sense of not being forced into teaching only on approved lines.

## II

### 16. *Nazism, Fascism and Russian Communism ill-conceived.*

To revert now to our original question, there is

only this much difference between Nazism and Fascism, that Nazism is better organised and touches society in more respects than Fascism. Beyond this, there does not seem to be much difference between the two. Both are equally full of racial pride. Having learnt their lesson from England, both have acquired a greed for expanding their empire. Both put their trust in military strength. Even as countries like Portugal, Spain, Holland, England and France tried to cover the world with their empires, so do these two countries. They have no definite philosophy so that any opinion formed about them from reading the relevant literature today has to be changed if we read books published about them a fortnight later.

As against these two, an experiment is being carried on in Russia under the name of Socialism or Communism. Its original idea was that it should be world-wide. But not being able to achieve this, it has become restricted to one nation. It has as much faith in military strength as the others. If it is a little behind the others in military preparations today it will soon make up the deficiency. To gain its ends it has no hesitation in adopting even un-principled and seemingly effective devices. As other nations have already captured

trade and as there is plenty of land in the country, Russia is planning chiefly agricultural production—not because of any fundamental reasons but because of prevailing circumstances.

Within the short space of twenty years, the Russian Revolution has become so colourless that it has almost lost all its attractiveness. The reason for this is that of the four aspects of Capitalism—centralisation, large-scale machinery, militarism and exploitation—, Socialism seeks to retain the first three and to do without the last. But such an attempt is based on delusion. It should be easy to see that in spite of all efforts to do away with the fourth, it will necessarily accompany the other three. The fascination for the efficiency of centralisation, for the leisure and comfort securable through large-scale machinery, and for the promise of safety held out by *military strength* is so great, that eager for comfort and entangled in illusion as people are, they are unwilling to do without even one of these three in order to put an end to exploitation.

As compared with Nazism and Fascism, Russian Communism, or whatever we may call it, appears to be well intentioned. But all the three are equally ill-conceived in that not one of them is capable of achieving the well-being of the majority of the people, leave alone the well-being of all.

17. *Further consideration of these forms of government :  
their misconceived doctrines.*

It is possible that when a state is in a stage of formation and is undergoing change at every step, any estimate or discussion of its merits or defects is liable to go wrong. For instance, tested in the light of international brotherhood, present-day thought in Italy and Germany is altogether devoid of it. On the other hand, internationalism should find a place in the philosophy of Russian Communism. But one of its doctrines is that so long as Communistic ideas have not spread over the whole world, Communism cannot be established in any one country. Besides, violence as a means of propagating its creed is not banned by it. So Russia can invade another country, when it is powerful enough to do so, for the sake of spreading Communism, without that country having caused any offence to Russia. So long as an opportunity for such an invasion does not arise, international brotherhood can remain at least as, a teaching in books. Later on, of course, it cannot remain even there. Devotees believe that whoever is smitten by Rama's arrows obtains heaven. Similarly the simple devotees of Communism are found to say that if Russia invades any country it is for the welfare of that country.

If we take all this into consideration, it is difficult to assert that as compared with Germany and Italy, Russia is any better judged from the point of view of realising international brotherhood.

On applying the last test we enumerated above, viz. freedom to spread the knowledge of truth, we find that such freedom is as much absent in Russia as in Germany not only today during war but also at other times. Similarly in regard to defence. As the means of defence in all these countries is violence, only that nation is considered wise which spends the greatest amount on defence. The idealism which provides the strength behind the Communistic thought of Russia is not to be found in Nazism and Fascism. On the other hand, in its place pride of birth and race seems today to supply the driving force for the government of these countries.

In the idealism of Communistic Russia, the desire which exists for the welfare of the masses is really not opposed to the welfare of all, as the welfare of all can be secured only through securing the welfare of the masses. Thus a more stable revolution than the present Russian Revolution can exist based on this unity of interests of all the people. But class war or conflict of interests was regarded as more effective and quicker in yielding

results than unity of interests, and so class war was resorted to. In consequence results seemed to be achieved fast at first, but afterwards in the attempt to save the situation it was found necessary to build Communism on national pride.

The leaders in their eagerness for quick results cannot resist the temptation to produce in the people an attitude of mind which is to all appearances full of strength and fervour, rather than to teach them to be balanced and discriminating in their judgments. The mass-centred philosophy of Russia and the nationalist philosophy of Germany provide illustrations of this truth. The German leaders imagined that perhaps the nation could not be organised quickly except by awakening pride of birth in them, and the Russian leaders fancied that without the part played by class conflict, the Revolution would not advance rapidly.

18. *The evil conditions prevailing in Mazzini's Italy: the rise to power of the military class in the name of protecting the people.*

If we look at conditions in Italy through the eyes of Joseph Mazzini we see a strange spectacle. Mazzini is of course a disciple of Gigot, but Gigot regarded doing to others as to oneself as the basis of realising freedom. This does not seem to

Mazzini to be enough. So he preaches freedom of all nations on the basis of the fatherhood of God. Even in his lifetime Italian self-Government comes into being. The people are of course overjoyed at having destroyed foreign rule ; but Mazzini weeps that his ideals have found no place in Italy. The government then set up has since been removed, and in its place military rule centering in a dictator has been established.

Whenever a military class comes forward as a class it does so in the name of the welfare of the people. This military class regards itself as heirs to the protective power of God. It is of course characterised by pride of birth, and through such pride it obtains easily the vigour necessary for achieving quick results. If this military class is defeated by internal faction or external aggression, the people will regret it for a moment, but will once more settle down to their usual mode of life.

19. *Communism as more attractive than the other two and as capable of improvement.*

The only question remaining to be dealt with is of these three forms of government which is the best and how shall it be decided ? When people have become tired of an old form of government they welcome any new order, whatever

its nature, which will destroy the old and take its place. The chief reason for their joy is that the old government has gone. After the Peshwa kings when the regime of Elphinstone began, the Maratthas of that day were happy that a new government based on law was established. But within less than 150 years this happiness disappeared and gave place to an atmosphere of discontent. It cannot be said that the joy which the Maratthas had under Elphinstone was entirely false. But such a joy will not move us today.

The people of Italy, Germany and Russia are happy today according to their own conception. We Indians have been under foreign domination for a long time, our poverty is unexampled and for our tradition-bound society race pride may seem attractive. And so at the present time there are two kinds of people in India—those who out of sympathy with the poor desire Socialism, and others who wish to organise the country on the basis of racial pride. Not considering the matter, however, from the point of view of conditions in India, but looking at it entirely impartially we shall have to admit that Nazism and Fascism cannot appear to a thinker to be as attractive and as easily capable of improvement as Socialism.



## CHAPTER III

*Question* : If the prevailing systems of government are defective, what should be the characteristics of a faultless government ?

*Answer* 20. *Four characteristics of a faultless government.*

The best government is one which does not insist on any particular form, but goes on changing its form from time to time. A system of government is not like a principle on which life can be based and which admits of no variations. When people are tired of a particular system they are often on the look out for a new system, but do not take into account the advantages or disadvantages which arise from its special merits or defects. A society oppressed by early marriage adopts adult marriage and it is possible that one dissatisfied with adult marriage will adopt early marriage. In reality, however, the safeguard against social degeneration is self-control. Merely by fixing the age of marriage social advance cannot be secured. The form of government where everyone will

administer the affairs of all will depend on the stage of development of society. But in any form of faultless government the following four characteristics must be found without fail :

1. Capable individuals will direct their capacity to service of the people.
2. The people will be fully self-dependent and co-operate with each other.
3. Non-violence will be the basis of their continual co-operation, and of occasional non-co-operation or resistance.
4. Honest work on the part of any one will be considered to be of equal value (moral and monetary). We shall now discuss briefly each of the above.

## I

21. *Public opinion should be such as to make capable individuals devote themselves to service of the people.*

By 'capable' is meant, the physically stronger and more intelligent. The difference is physiological and at present there is no way of getting over such differences. But alongside of them, there is today a group which has become capable owing to wealth and its instruments. The first two groups are based on nature, while the third depends on extraneous causes. The fact that these

three kinds of capacity have been obtained by these three groups, from nature or from circumstances, for the service of the people should be constantly kept before the minds of these groups as well as before the people. The government which carries on the administration according to prevailing circumstances should be such as will lead capable individuals to dedicate themselves definitely to the service of the people. The work of intelligence is to fill the life of people with knowledge, the work of physical strength to do brave deeds for the good of the people, and the work of wealth to promote a proper flow of productive capacity through the entire extent of the body of society and to make for equal distribution. Public opinion should regard a capable individual who will not use his powers thus for the welfare of society as an offender, judged in the light of the rules of the State.

22. *Restraint included in a government based on public opinion.*

When once public opinion has been formed in regard to this matter, law can be enacted if necessary to enforce it. Control by law or restraint has a place in a non-violent state conducted on the basis of public opinion. It is not true,

as is popularly believed, that society keeps to the right path only out of fear of punishment. The fact of the matter is that to keep people straight, fear of public opinion—or shall we say respect for public opinion—has proved, and does prove most useful. There are always in society a few noble individuals who do not require public opinion to hold them within the limits of morality. Similarly there are also wayward and indiscriminate individuals who unmindful of public opinion go against the laws of morality. But the general public or the great majority of people observe what is ordained and avoid what is prohibited by public opinion. Such public opinion naturally constitutes the basis of law or restraint, and the vast majority of people always respect it. The few wayward individuals who remain outside this number should be put in the company of the few who are high-souled, instead of being submitted to forcible restraint. That is, those who pay no heed to the law should be put in the charge of those who have no need for the law, and the rest of society should go on according to law.

*23. Miserliness as much actionable as theft.*

Today public opinion has no respect for a thief. The same should be its attitude to the miser or the

hoarder. That is, just as a thief is liable to be brought under the law, so public opinion should regard a miser as actionable under the law. Just as cultured parents teach their children even from childhood that to take anything without asking is a great wrong, educational science should hold that not to give to one who asks in need is a moral wrong. This idea is not new, but it has not yet been given effect to as a general principle. King Ashvapati of the Upanishads described the glory of his kingdom in this one sentence—‘In my kingdom there is neither a thief nor a miser’. That is, he places both of them in the same category, and suggests in what follows that the miser is the progenitor of thieves, and that the thief is the miser’s legitimate heir. It is not all difficult to embody this idea in law.

#### 24. *The Use of Wealth.*

In vain is it said that the wealth of the rich should be forcibly taken away from them. Actually the rich do not desire to keep wealth merely for the sake of accumulating it. They do it in order to obtain status, happiness, security for the future, maintenance of children, and fame as benefactors—if not for all of these purposes, at least for some of them. If it is so contrived that they

can somehow obtain all these things easily, and in addition can also be carefree, then they will not be displeased with such an arrangement. Even to-day the wealth of the rich becomes distributed amongst partners, agents and such others. Beyond these, there is, as a matter of fact, no other way of spending wealth. Entrusting their wealth into the hands of agents, the rich have to spend their lives worrying that the agents may be cheating them and at the same time comforting themselves with the idea that after all the agents may not be cheating them. If instead of this, the government convinces capable individuals that their wealth is being spent on public enterprises, then in the place of anxiety they will have the advantage of a feeling that they are being useful to the people, and in addition to this and in exchange for it they will obtain status and all the other things they desire, not less than formerly but more and in a very real form.

25. *Illustration—The Teaching Class, Ancient and Modern.*

In ancient times in India the learned teacher was without wealth. From this it should not be thought that his outer life, not to speak of his inner life, was without happiness. On the other

hand, it should be considered that his being without wealth meant that he was free from worry regarding it. His students performed for him all the service he needed and more. At times he exercised authority even over the emperor. He did not submit to interference on the part of any one in his sphere of teaching. He enjoyed long life. Whether a class of such teachers ever existed may be disputed. But if such a class existed it would not have been, nor would it be less honoured, less happy or less glorious. The modern teacher, on the other hand, is a teacher of books, not of students. That is, he has no place in the life of his student, nor they in his life. Instead of such mutual affection he receives much money which is snatched away from him during illness and such like by doctors and others. The result is he is not any better off, and by becoming too expensive for the people he is deprived of the opportunity of serving them. States, i. e., public opinion should see to it that every individual will of himself come to realise that it does not make for happiness to accumulate wealth in this way by antagonising the people.

26. *Wealth Increases Through Giving.*

There is a saying current among the people:

that knowledge increases two-fold by imparting, and it is usually thought that in this respect wealth is different in nature from knowledge. But this is really not so. In Economics increase of wealth through parting with it is called increase in the purchasing power of the people. The lender sees an increase in his own wealth when he gives all of it to the borrower. Obviously, there is an even greater increase when wealth is distributed. But society has to be organised in such a way as to facilitate distribution. Such an organisation is part of an ideal system of government. Society is the bank of the individual. His money will be more secure in this bank than in any other.

27. *Man's Happiness lies in giving, but the idea of the right of ownership acts as an obstacle.*

The glory of attractiveness that attaches to the capacity of capable individuals lies in nothing else than in service of the people. In such service also lies human contentment. As man is a social being he is never happy when he partakes of a good thing by himself without any one to share it with him. At the same time it is also a fact that the rich who shut themselves up as though in cattle-pounds enjoy some kind of outward happiness although they are aware of and see the semi-



starved all around them. How is such behaviour which is contrary to human nature possible? Not because the rich are not human, but because of the half-true and half-false idea prevalent in society that every individual is responsible for his own earnings and has every right to it. Every individual should of course earn to the best of his ability. Whoever fails to earn in spite of being able to do so has no right to wealth. At the same time it is perfectly true that whoever works to the best of his ability is entitled to an equal share in the collective earnings. If there were no differences between individuals in their capacity, then whatever inequality there may be in their earnings can be attributed to one working more honestly than the other, and in that case it will be right to say that every individual is equally responsible for and has an equal right to his earnings. But when there is clearly a difference between man and man in capacity, it is wrong to calculate mathematically by a mere application of the rule of three, man's responsibility for his earnings.

28. *The duty of the government to apply to society the principle of the economics of the family—or the parable of the lame and the blind.*

The State exists merely to apply to the whole

of society the economic principle which is found everywhere to a greater or less extent in the family. This is a task beyond the powers of the family. If the state does not do this service, there is no need for its existence. If instead of performing this service it produces economic inequality it will be right to destroy it and to establish anarchy. Administrators have spread fear of anarchy everywhere in order to make people submit meekly to their rule, however bad it may be.

We regard capable individuals as capable. But without the help of the masses who are thought to be incapable, the work of the capable cannot be accomplished. In this sense the capables are indeed incapable. As over against this, those whom we call incapable have their own special capacity. Without it even the State cannot be carried on. The result is that both of them are incapable without the other's help and become capable only by mutual assistance. The case is similar to the analogy, used by the Sankhya philosophers, of the lame man being carried by the blind man, neither of whom could reach his destination without the help of the other. A State, in which capable individuals do not have the intelligence to understand this truth that only in both these elements of society working together lies

their mutual good, is really not a political order at all, but is even more anarchic than anarchy itself. Briefly, it amounts to this, that the authority of the State must of course vest in capable individuals, but that authority must be only the authority to serve the people.

## II

29. *Villages should be self-sufficient : village industries as conducive thereto.*

To bring about such a state of affairs, i. e., to see that capable individuals have no power given to them other than that of service, it is essential that the people should never be entirely helpless or weak. They must be so self-reliant that they are conscious of their own strength, i. e., of their own independent strength. This means that they must have industries which they can themselves control. It will certainly not do for the masses to depend like factory hands on industries controlled mostly by others. Every village should from the economic point of view become for the most part a self-sufficient unit. Conditions should be such that capable individuals will of their own free will help the masses, and the masses also will of their own accord give their co-operation to the capable few. This can happen only when the people stand on

their own legs. There is no other way. All those needs which we call the primary requirements of life as well as most of what we call secondary requirements should be met by the people of the village from the village itself. Beyond this, whatever other secondary or other needs there may be should be supplied by the State through its capable individuals.

Out of raw materials grown in his field by the villager, whatever finished products can be manufactured should as far as possible be made in his house and the rest in the village. It may be said that in India today the villager does nothing beyond producing raw materials. He sells oil-seeds; but far from meeting the needs of others for oil, he buys oil even for his own use. He grows cotton; but he buys not only cloth but also cotton seeds for sowing, and for feeding his cattle. In order to meet all his requirements he has to sell his grain. In such selling he suffers loss. With whatever money he thus obtains he has to buy what he needs. In this buying also he suffers loss. Such a helpless condition of the people is beneficial neither to the masses, nor to the State, nor to the few who are regarded as capable. Therefore the natural form of an ideal organisation of society will be one in which a network of village industries

supplementing agriculture will exist throughout the country, and the State will see to their protection and stability. For distributing wealth equally like so many rain-drops in every house, for making the masses of the people self-dependent, for not only the capable few rendering service to the many, but for the many also out of their strength rendering service to the capable few, and for strengthening mutual co-operation between the people there is no plan so natural, easy and efficient as village industries.

30. *The Socialist's plan fraught with danger.*

As against this, there is an alternative plan which the Socialists put forward. According to it wealth is first accumulated in one place and then equally distributed. But this involves three dangers. Firstly, as compared with the unitary process of equally and naturally distributing wealth through the very act of production, it increases cost from the economic point of view, as it requires two processes, viz., of first collecting wealth in one place and then of distributing it equally. Secondly, special arrangements have to be made for protecting this collected wealth, and even then it is an easy target for foreign attack. Thirdly, because of all this, the organisation of society becomes so

complicated, intricate and its parts interdependent that there can be no certainty that the whole mechanism will not some day collapse because of too much friction.

31. *Interdependence should be simple, not complicated.*

Interdependence is of course a very good thing. But it should be between groups which are in themselves strong or self-dependent. Interdependence between groups which are dependent on others is like that of two weak bulls yoked to a cart, each trying to pull the cart by shoving its share of the weight on to the other. A stool stands on three legs. There is mutual co-operation between these three legs, but each leg stands in its own strength. This is a simple mechanism. If one of the legs breaks, it is necessary to repair that leg alone. But a machine which has one wheel within another and that in a third and so on, and thus has a series of wheels within wheels, is said to be complicated. If one of those wheels breaks it will interfere with the working of the others and stop the whole machine, and its repair will be very difficult as compared with that of a simple machine. Besides even when the machine is in operation, there will be many places in it where there is friction and which require elaborate oiling.

32. *The self-sufficient State and the wider humanity.*

All plans to gather wealth together and then to distribute it entail much strain on the State, and in the end involve also resorting to violence. So if we wish to avoid complicating the organisation of society, placing too much of a strain on the State, and resorting to violence, it is necessary to see that every villager is his own ruler, and that the co-operation between villagers is strong like that of the fibres of a well-knit rope. When this happens the villager in combination with his village will form a natural and well-nigh self-sufficient political unit.

That which brings together such self-governing village units is the nominal provincial political organisation. That which brings together such provinces is the nominal national political organisation, and that which brings about mutual co-operation between such self-governing nations is the nominal political organisation of all humanity. In this political organisation of all humanity—which we have described as nominal—there will be a Parliament of individuals, wise, representative and impartial, from all over the world. This Parliament will have no power of punishment or physical force, but it will have abundant power of restraint or moral force. Such a wide conception of humanity

as a whole has to be brought about in man. The opinion of those versed in Politics that unless the central state is all-powerful it will prove useless is right. But the source of such power does not lie in lifeless weapons or gold but in dispassionate wisdom and character. It is clear that the establishment of such a humanity-wide political organisation cannot take place so long as people are not self-dependent and do not co-operate with each other.

### III

#### 33. *The State as always dependent on the human element.*

However good a political form of government may be, in actual practice its excellence depends at least to some extent on the fitness and goodness or badness of individuals who have been entrusted with its administration on behalf of society. An essential characteristic of the best state is so to plan that as a rule only good men will be invariably chosen for administering it. But in spite of it there is bound to be a greater or less extent the good or bad effect of the personality of individuals on the administration. The science of political organisation, or the science of Politics in short, is not a regular science like Applied Mathematics.



much less like Pure Mathematics. Pure Mathematics moves in the realm of abstract thought. Applied Mathematics in the realm of matter. But the field of Political is in the realm of human affairs, which is different from the realms of abstract thought and matter. Hence it is that it is not possible to give Politics a mere mechanical form independent of the human element.

34. *Therefore the need for protection in the form of Satyagraha (non-violent insistence on truth).*

The aim of Politics is to safeguard the entire good of all men, in every form and in such a way as not to produce conflict. For this purpose, (1) the widest franchise, (2) rule according to the opinion of the majority, (3) complete protection of and utmost satisfaction to minorities, (4) freedom to propagate one's opinions, (5) impartial, cheap and easy administration of justice, (6) provision for universal education, (7) code of reformatory punishment, and such like, which are regarded as the external characteristic of a good government, are proper. But owing to Politics being dependent on the human factor, many defects, controversies and disputes are capable of arising, and to get over them, the people should know the right time for co-operation, non-co-operation and resistance and

have the ability to put them into action as required by circumstances. The necessary non-violent technique should have become a part of their very nature.

35. *True co-operation and fitness for non-co-operation.*

Co-operation is an eternal principle of life. But it is only when it is given voluntarily and with full knowledge that it is useful and that it is non-violent, and only then is it true co-operation. On the other hand, a co-operation given because of helplessness or ignorance is not of any use to a good state, for though it may look outwardly like co-operation it cannot last long because of its unreality. It will develop first into hidden violence and then assuredly into open violence. Therefore every member of the general public must feel that law is made by the majority opinion of the people, that the people can therefore change it, that so long as they do not change it, and it is not opposed to morality, he should obey it voluntarily, joyfully and unreservedly, even if as an individual he does not like it. There is of course no question in regard to co-operating with the State in the case of a man who does not find himself in disagreement with the law; but when a man happens to disagree with the law, if his frame of mind while co-operating is

as described above, then only can his co-operation be said to be non-violent. It is only an individual who thus as a rule gives his co-operation that has the right, when occasion demands it, to offer non-co-operation and resistance. It is such individuals that are capable of non-violent resistance, and it is the duty of only such to offer resistance of this kind.

36. *The need to educate people in regard to non-co-operation and resistance.*

Just as one aspect of education, or awakening the consciousness of people is to teach them to co-operate with the State as far as possible, and that voluntarily and with full knowledge, the other aspect of education is to teach them to recognise the proper occasion for non-co-operation and resistance, and when such an occasion arises, to offer non-violent non-co-operation and resistance.

Non-co-operation and resistance are two stages of one and the same thing. As compared with the former, the latter is more drastic. Where it is possible by non-co-operation to accomplish what is desired, resistance should not be resorted to. In non-co-operation, the hand of co-operation is withdrawn and an opportunity is given to the opponent for remedying the situation. Only when

it is clear that this much is not enough it becomes necessary to break the law of the State. In so doing one must act (1) civilly, i. e., within the specified limits one has set for oneself, (2) in an orderly manner, i. e., not allowing any breach of discipline anywhere, (3) openly, i. e., not hiding anything and without pretence or deceit, (4) firmly, i. e., putting forward one's minimum demand in regard to the matter in dispute and not giving in till it is met. Whatever punishment is given for such violation of law should be borne gladly and without any feeling of hatred. Training of this kind should enter into the very life of the people and for this purpose it should find a permanent place in education and in the ethical codes of the nation.

37. *The permanent place of non-co-operation in social life.*

Though in a good State non-co-operation and resistance are occasional and depend on time and circumstance, they occupy a permanent place in social life. For they are required not only in the political field but also more or less constantly in social relationships, family affairs and in dealings between one individual and another. Between the two extremes of bearing injustice passively without resistance, and resisting violently in a fit of

passion forgetful of all caution (or even in a cold calculating matter) lies the noble middle way of nonviolent, non-co-operation and resistance. Whatever the nature of the state, the attitude of mind and the strength required for resorting to this method where necessary, should be kept alive through the ethical codes of society.

38. *The direction along which education in non-co-operation should proceed, distinction between rules and principles.*

For this purpose, from childhood children should be taught exceptions to general rules. For instance, side by side with the teaching that children should humbly carry out the orders of their parents, the parents themselves should teach their children that if their orders do not appeal to the children's conscience, the children should respectfully break the orders. Public opinion in regard to other broad rules also should be of this nature. Manu said that wise men always respect principles, i. e., the eternal moral principles of truth, non-violence and such like, but that no one is expected to respect rules also thus invariably. What Manu meant was that rules relating to the family, society or the nation, whatever their nature, should undoubtedly be obeyed so long as they do not conflict with

principles, but when they do thus conflict they should be abandoned respectfully.

In a good social order, rules are of such a nature as not to be contrary to eternal principles. But the nature of a machine in operation is such that there is always the possibility of friction arising in it to a greater or less extent. So it is never the case that once an ideal State has been established, it can be trusted of itself to look after the people and give them happiness while the people themselves comfortably fall asleep or go about with their eyes shut. Even if such a State were for purposes of argument assumed to be possible, there can be no development of the individual under it. Therefore it is that by the grace of God such a State cannot be established.

Briefly, then, it should be regarded as an essential characteristic of a good State that the people are sufficiently alert, or are kept alert, to be able to practise, as required by circumstance, co-operation, non-co-operation and resistance, entirely non-violently, and keeping in mind the limitations of these modes of action.

39. *Successful application of non-violence in history: illustration from India.*

Solving the problems of a country like India

with its many communities, religions and languages, its vast population and immense area is almost like solving the problems of the whole world. Those who regarded so huge a country as one at a time when modern means of communication were not yet invented must have done so only because they learnt from endless quarrels that the solution lay in the important principle of organising the many warring elements into one nation. The secret that comes to view in this is that a huge country such as ours can not hold together as one except through non-violence, and it is because of this that by far the highest place has been given in the ethics of India to non-violence in the field of politics, social life, family affairs, economics and education.

As a result, the common people of India had given up for long all faith in arms, and had begun to think of India as one nation, or a Rabindranath Tagore called it as an 'ocean of humanity' and therefore as requiring to be kept open for all. But in spite of non-violence being kept before the minds of people thus as a mode of action, it must be admitted that there are very few cases where non-violence was practised on any extensive scale in the realm of Politics. From a history of the communities living in India it is clear that India had put this

principle in practice to a very large extent in the sphere of social, family and individual life. In social life for instance owing to the practice of non-violence, all races coming into the country from outside became part of the nation itself.

40. *Non-violence as the sole basis for the masses, good men and elders coming together.*

But why was non-violence not applied in the political field ? Chiefly because Politics as such did not occupy an important place in India. Today of course Politics touches every aspect of life, so that good men, elders and ordinary men cannot afford, i. e., no one can afford to be indifferent to it.

If the masses depending on their own strength were to occupy themselves with Politics which today has become co-extensive with life, they cannot do so without the practice of non-violence, for violence depending as it does on armaments and training given by the few does not constitute the strength of the people taken by themselves. Similarly if good men were to take part in the all pervasive affairs of the State, they also cannot do so without non-violence, for violence is not a part of their nature. And if the elders were to take part in such far-reaching political life (and it would seem



that for such men this is nothing new although as a matter of fact it is, for till now political affairs in which they engaged themselves were never co-extensive with life ) there is no way of their doing so except through resorting to non-violence. For though the disposition and capacity for violence may be present in them, there is no scope for violence in a political administration which is as wide as life. Therefore non-violence provides the only safe basis for a political code such as will bring ordinary men, good men and elders together.

41. *Non-violence alone capable of always inspiring reverential fear in the wicked.*

By nature good people should know how to wield this weapon which has the quality of protecting society, and they should impart this knowledge to the people. The State should give them freedom to do this. If they cannot obtain this freedom from the State, they should explain its importance to the elders and obtain it through offering Satyagraha if necessary. This is an essential characteristic of every good State.

It is not true that the disposition and aptitude for non-violence cannot be so easily maintained by administrative officers as the disposition and aptitude for violence. But when the people become

weak, and good men grow indifferent, and all the responsibility for withstanding evil men rests entirely on the elders, then these officers see no other way of meeting violence except with counter-violence. But when the people, the good men and the elders combine together—and we have shown above that their coming together is unavoidable in the case of an all-embracing political life—it will not be impossible by means of non-violence to resist wicked men, however well-organised they may be. On the other hand, such resistance is desirable, for thus there is an opportunity of removing the root cause of the conduct of wicked men, viz. their wickedness itself.

The combining together of the masses, the good men and the elders on the basis of non-violence will check the wicked and fill them with reverential fear for all time. As we suggested above it is not at all possible for these three to combine except on the basis of non-violence. Their joining together and keeping the wicked under control and in eternal awe is indeed an important attribute of a good government. As compared with this, all its other excellences should be regarded as secondary. Even if it possesses all other virtues but not this, the government will be like a painting, beautiful in every respect but devoid of life.

## IV

42. *The value of labour.*

In the ideal State, the method of estimating the value of labour cannot be purely mechanical and irresponsible as it is today. The ideal State will feel responsible for maintaining and protecting all its members, whatever their physical strength, intellectual capacity, or fitness or lack of fitness for work. All cannot work in the same way. Besides, there is also undoubtedly a difference between physical and mental work. And even in physical there is a difference between skilled and unskilled work. But in spite of all these differences, whoever works without shirking, honestly, and to the best of his ability, at something which is useful to society should be regarded as deserving of equal right to maintenance.

43. *The expression 'Economic value of service' is wrong.*

In reality it is wrong to speak of economic value of physical or mental service, for service belongs to the moral sphere, and therefore its value can be appraised only in terms of morality. How can the value of the service of one who looks after a patient during illness, or keeps awake at night or labours for him, be estimated in terms of economics? How

can we determine in money the value of an impartial judgment delivered by a judge ? How can we by applying the rule of three calculate the value of the act of saving a person from drowning or rescuing him out of a raging fire ? We have given these different cases in order to illustrate some kinds of work which are mental, some physical and others of a mixed nature. But all the three are infinitely valuable, i. e., invaluable. Therefore it is but proper that abandoning all idea of calculating the value of service or labour, every individual should with full devotion serve society by throwing all his energy into his work, and society in its turn should do its duty of maintaining the individual.

44. *The rule prevalent in the family, viz. honest work according to ability and commensurate recompense and equal protection for all.*

When we adopt the principle of providing a maintenance the extreme differences we find in wages today will automatically disappear. Sometimes it happens in families that expenditure over children is even more than over those who are earners. These children have of course done no service at all; it may be that they will render service later. Even then one does not first calculate how much service they can do in the future and on the

basis of that spend money on them. Instead parents think it their responsibility to bring up their children. Similarly, the State should regard such responsibility in regard to every individual as its duty, and the individual in his turn should as a matter of duty dedicate all his talents to the service of society. But there should be no weighing of the service rendered by the individual as over against the protection given by the State. The total amount of service rendered by all the individuals and the total amount of protection given by the State to all its members, will balance up against each other.

Further, it is necessary here to understand the difference between protection and wages. Every individual will receive absolutely equal protection. But that does not mean that he will receive equal wages or salary, for equal wages do not result in equal protection. A man should be given only that much wage as is necessary to fulfil the State's responsibility to give him equal protection. The result may be that a very capable individual whose needs are few will get less wages and an individual of meagre capacity whose needs are many will receive more wages. A general whose digestion is good may get only two annas a day while a common soldier with a weak digestion may receive as much as a rupee.

45. *Summary.*

Briefly, all the principles mentioned above may be enumerated as follows :—(1) Every one will receive equal protection. (2) Service from each will be according to his ability and will therefore be unequal. (3) To obtain equal protection is not the same as receiving equal wages. (4) But the inequality which prevails in wages today will under no circumstances exist. (5) Wages will be as little unequal as possible, or to put it positively will be commensurate. (6) Inequality in wages will not be in proportion to inequality of service but in proportion to inequality of need. (7) The total amount of service rendered by all the individuals and the total amount of protection given to them by the State will be equal to each other.

46. *The example of contractors and reconciliation of differences in labour.*

It cannot be said that an organisation based on these seven principles is not known anywhere. In our villages when a few villagers join together and take up contract work, though they do not all do equal work they divide up their contract wages more or less equally. In such work those who wish to shirk do not find an opportunity for doing so, and those who are honest but somewhat weak,

receive some concession. Because of working as a group, enthusiasm for the task increases and a feeling of brotherhood develops. It is not at all impossible to expand this mode of working to cover all society.

Difficulties due to the fact that there are various kinds of physical work will not ordinarily be felt in experimenting with such an organisation. But the chief difficulty which will be raised will be on the side of the educated classes in estimating the value of physical and mental work as equivalent. But if we take into account the protection and satisfaction which will come about owing to the brotherliness which will be established under such an order, this difficulty should really not exist. The inequality in wages between men and women is of course entirely without foundation. More perseverance, care and art is found in women's work. As against this, women cannot as a rule do work requiring much physical strength. So there is no difficulty about both men and women being joined together in economic equality. Differences between men and women, differences in physical work, differences between physical and mental work, differences in mental work, all such differences are on the same footing from the national points of view. There is real difference,

however, between honest and dishonest labour. Similarly the difference between skilled and unskilled work is unavoidable. There is no responsibility of course to protect dishonesty. Nevertheless the State does have the responsibility of reforming dishonest individuals, and when it takes upon itself this responsibility, their protection follows logically. To turn unskilled labourers into skilled labourers is also part of the work of the State. Even so, some labour is by its very nature less skilled, and at the same time it is needed by the nation. Such work can be assigned to the less skilled labourers.

47. *Collective responsibility an excellent incentive.*

It is assumed today that the only way to encouraging skill, honesty, enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility among the people is by payment of wages to a greater or less degree. But as compared to it collective responsibility will give people an even greater incentive because social esteem and self-satisfaction are implied in it. A hundred other rewards cannot produce the same enthusiasm in a child as his mother's word of appreciation. Even if the rewards put enthusiasm into him they at the same time increase his greed. So there is no other way of bringing



about social equilibrium ( or abolition of economic inequality ) than by regarding social esteem and, even more, self-satisfaction as themselves providing the necessary incentive, and by building the economic organisation on the principle of commensurate compensation.

48. *From this point of view hereditary occupational groups a great experiment in Hinduism.*

From this view point, the organisation of society in terms of hereditary occupational groups is a very great experiment made by Hinduism. But because of ideas of superiority and inferiority coming into it, its original pure form became contaminated and later through attraction for the principle of economic competition, it became altogether destroyed. That the individual should do the work allotted to him by society, that society should allot him work in view of his fitness, that his inherited dispositions should be taken advantage of in training him into fitness, that having acquired fitness the individual should regard it his duty to take up the work for which he has been trained, that no others should compete with him in his work, that all should receive equal protection and commensurate wages, that all, who do their allotted work with devotion and with a sense of

responsibility, should be esteemed equally, and that every individual should work and God be pleased with his worship in the form of doing his own appointed task—such in short is the institution of the hereditary occupational groups.

An ideal State will have need for some such social organisation. The essence of the caste system is (1) commensurate wages, (2) absence of competition, and (3) a system of education which will take advantage of inherited dispositions. The first two principles are of great importance in economics, and the third in sociology. Some regard the third as controversial. If it proves to be so, at least the first two will remain unchallenged, and the social organisation will have to be made to rest firmly on them alone. But if after being tested in the light of reason and experience, the third also should prove to be incontrovertibly true—and it is quite possible that it does so—then the institution of hereditary occupational groups should be revived, but without any idea of superiority and inferiority, and without by any means allowing it to develop into a rigid steel frame.

49. *Insistence to be on the substance, not on the form.*

The spirit of service, self-reliance, non-violent strength, and commensurate wages for all—these

are the four pillars on which the edifice of the State should rest. The outer form of a State may be different according to conditions prevailing in a particular place or time and according to the mental level of society. A family which consists of parents and infants is of a particular form, a family which consists of parents and boys and girls is of another form, and a family which consists of quite old parents and grown-up sons and daughters is of still another form. Similarly, owing to differences arising from natural causes or due to accidental circumstances, families may be said to be large or small, collective or single, and so on. In all these families, the root idea of the family is one and the same, and only the outer form is different.

Adherents of particular systems of medicine insist on their own method of treatment. So also political thinkers becoming supporters and advocates of different schools of thought claim that their particular theory or form of government is applicable for all time and in all places. But today when even an exact science like mathematics has to accept the doctrine of relativity, surely Politics or the science of social organisation in its broad sense cannot claim any finality for itself.

In reality such fundamental sciences as ca

strictly be called science are very few, and they control men ( in the sense that their principles have to be submitted to by men ). All the others which are called sciences lay down rules which are only practical guides to conduct and are devised and regulated by men. The nature of these two kinds of science—one regulating men and the other regulated by men—is different one from the other. To forget this difference and to attempt to give the form of the ‘regulating’ sciences to the ‘regulated’ sciences is unscientific.

Therefore it is best to insist, only on those four principles enumerated above, which are necessary for a government which will bring about the welfare and happiness of the people, and to leave all other matters to be determined as required by circumstances.

## CHAPTER IV

*Question* : Can a government based on non-violence endure ?

*Answer* : 50. *Experiments in violence end in total war.*

At the back of this question lies the assumption that a government based on violence can endure. Actually in history till today all nations have practised violence for the sake of making their governments endure. And still it has not yet been found that a government based on violence can survive. The hold of violence on our minds is so great that even though violence has failed a thousand times we still continue to put faith on its capacity to succeed. The negative evidence provided by the fact that no State based on violence has survived should suffice to make us conclude that a State cannot survive except through non-violence. When alongside of this it is considered that States which have been able to endure or are still enduring, to a greater or less extent on violence, are anxious to obtain the support of public opinion or in other words of non-violence, a strong suspicion must arise in the minds of even the most confirmed

believers in violence that somehow or other non-violence alone provides the basis for making a government endure. It is clear that experiments in violence have till now proved fruitless. How many times are we to give the benefit of doubt to violence by thinking that perhaps the reason for the failure of the experiments is not violence but some other shortcoming? The truth is that for the violence committed by one, a second commits greater violence, on the principle of returning more evil for less, and a third still greater, and so on till we reach the total war of today.

51. *From this, non-violence, a logical consequence.*

In one way, this has proved useful. The criterion which is employed in the science of Ethics for determining whether from the point of view of morals a principle is right or wrong, and whether from a practical point of view it is advantageous or disadvantageous, is to extend it to apply to all men and see what the result is. A principle which when thus extended tends to vanish, or not to hold good, or to destroy itself, should undoubtedly be regarded as invalid, both from the moral and practical points of view. If for instance we have to decide whether begging is good or bad, we must see what happens if everybody begs, and then

it will be seen that such begging is impossible, it destroys itself. So begging is not good. But who will experiment in this way with violence, merely for the purposes of theoretical determination ? The nations of Europe, however, who are steadily increasing in violence on the principle of returning more evil or less, are without intending it doing the valorous task of proving, in the light of the criterion of Ethics, whether violence is good or bad.

There is indeed no need now to try individual or groups fights, or miscellaneous minor wars. Today if there is to be fighting at all it has to be a total war or nothing. The brave, ever experimenting people of Europe who are devoted to carrying on experiments have left no third course open. Perhaps only this course now remains that a nation which has been defeated in a total war will take the help of several other nations and instead of by itself engaging in total war will involve whole continents or combination of nations in it. But however much this process may be extended, there is no scope now for its going much further. After violence has been experimented with to the widest extent and to the highest degree, the only course left is for violence to destroy itself and to give place to non-violence. Not only popular

opinion amongst the discriminating, but also amongst the masses has arrived at or is moving towards this conclusion.

52. *In non-violence, no such thing as outdoing the opponent.*

After thus dismissing the method of violence from our thoughts, we are left only with the method of non-violence. There is no room then for entertaining doubts and suspicions in regard to non-violence. It remains now only to experiment with it in full faith. The principle of outdoing the opponent does not come in the way of non-violence. He who has more non-violence than I do not wish to crush me ; he wishes to change my heart. By doing this, he naturally succeeds, and it turns out to be a success for me also. One man's victory is another man's defeat is true in the realm of violence. In the sphere of non-violence one man's victory is also another man's victory. If there is any matter in dispute, it is entrusted to the decision of impartial arbitrators. So simple is the way of non-violence.

53. *A nation wide experiment in non-violence in a way easier than individual experiment with it.*

When two individuals come together and ill-feeling arises between them, it is possible that even



before the non-violence of the non-violent individual can have its effect on the violent individual, or even before there is a chance for the non-violent individual to act at all, the violent individual, being beside himself, with rage will finish off his evil business. Such a thing is possible in individual relationships, but not in relationship between nations. It cannot be that in the case of ill-feeling arising between nations, a whole nation suddenly grows mad, and even before the effect of the non-violence of the non-violent nation can be felt by it, it annihilates that nation. But when even in individual fights, where it is possible for the individual to become mad, the non-violent person has almost always triumphed over the violent one, there is no reason why in wars between nations, where there is no possibility of madness, a nation which resorts to non-violence should not anyhow succeed. Further, where there is not as in the case of violence such a thing as one man's conquest being another man's destruction, there should be no room for doubt in regard to the success of the non-violent nation.

54. *For non-violence also, training, organisation and sacrifice are essential.*

When we are confronted with the problem of

choosing between the alternatives of either a non-violent State or preparations for a total war, the way of non-violence does at once attract us ; but even then there is need for organisation, training, etc. if we are to have a non-violent State. Though the organisation required for non-violence may be different from that required for a total war, it will have to be so extensive as to touch the life of every individual. We have suggested a plan for this alone. Before it is put into practice it is necessary to educate public opinion which has of itself turned towards non-violence into becoming non-violent with full knowledge. The masses always incline towards non-violence, but they should be made non-violent because of a knowledge of the principles underlying it. For inactive non-violence will not do. Instead there will be need for active non-violence, non-violence which extends to every sphere of life. Non-violence is a faith or outlook relating to all things. Outlook cannot be restricted to one matter only but ought to extend to every aspect of life. If it is assumed that the present economic and social order must anyhow continue how can there be scope left in that case for non-violence ? If on the other hand the entire administration of national and international affairs were made to rest on the principle of non-violence,

there is nothing in non-violence which can make such an order not endure.

We see today that nations have to make tremendous sacrifices in order to defend violent States. But when it comes to defending a 'non-violent' State it is expected as a matter of course that it should be done without the slightest damage to life and property. Although non-violent defence is safe in every respect there is no guarantee that it can be accomplished without effort. With a little imagination one must be prepared for suffering and death, for offering up one's life peacefully without doing the slightest harm to the enemy. The battle of non-violence does not take place on the battlefield but in the heart. But in non-violence also, there must be preparedness for battle. Even if non-violence spread throughout the world, there would be need for preparedness. Neither violence nor non-violence allows room for a man to earn all at one time and to enjoy for the rest of his life. It will always be necessary to keep awake the power of resistance. A life of non-violence means not merely occasional sacrifice but perpetual sacrifice, and not merely sacrifice but joy in sacrifice.

55. *A non-violent order not beyond human capacity.*

But many wonder how all this is possible.

Some ask if superhuman powers will not be required for this. If we begin to think of superhuman individuals there will be no question of resistance. When we talk of resistance we are thinking only of ordinary men. We exclude only man's lower nature. We do not expect that this lower nature will altogether disappear from all men. We expect only that it will remain under the control of his higher nature. So it is not by any means beyond our powers to have a non-violent order. No other social order can be as enduring as a non-violent one.

## CHAPTER V

*Question:* When all other nations believe in violence, can one nation alone remain non-violent ?

*Answer :* 56. *Even alone, a non-violent nation is protected by the invincible armour of universal sympathy.*

According to the non-violent way of thinking, human society is one, and in it separate nations are conceived of merely for the sake of convenience. If a particular nation has the good sense to adopt non-violence, it will not regard itself as separate from and as opposed to the others. It will be anxious to safeguard the legitimate interests of neighbouring nations as those of its own. Certainly whole nations do not become violent and even if they adopt violence, rather it must be said that they adopt violence only because of mutual rivalry. People do not like violence for its own sake. So if a nation appears, which entertains the desire to conduct its affairs in accordance with non-violence, and therefore strives to relate itself to the rest of the world on the basis of non-opposition, it will awaken the conscience of neighbouring nations,

make their conscience operate, and to that extent put those nations on the way of non-violence.

A non-violent nation will not dump its goods on another nation by force. In a non-violent nation, every village will be devoted to labour and be self-dependent. Therefore there will be no scope in it for the greed of other nations. If another nation considers the non-violent nation to be opposed to its own interests, then the non-violent nation will in a friendly manner assist that nation to find a way out and to give it entire satisfaction. If famine or other calamities befall other nations, it will help them as far as it is able, without any thought of reward for itself. It will be ready to submit controversial matters to arbitration. If another nation does not agree to having justice meted out by arbitrators, or if after agreeing it does not accept their verdict but invades the non-violent country, the latter will resist such a nation non-violently. A nation which maintains such an attitude towards other nations will not remain alone. It will gain an armour of sympathy for itself throughout the world. Why is it impossible to imagine such a nation ?

57. *A non-violent nation, altogether free from fear.*

Well : why does an outside nation seek to

invade ? (a) Is it because it has little land and much population while we have plenty of land and little population ? If some of them wish to stay in our country and accept our order, why should we not welcome them ? We have stated above that a non-violent nation will not regard itself as separate from others. The attitude of ancient India cannot be said to have been one of non-violence of the scientific, firmly established, thorough-going kind. Even then did not India give shelter to the Parsis in their trouble ? And what did India lose thereby ? (b) Or will another nation invade because of famine or other calamity ? How can a non-violent nation remain without helping such a nation even at the cost of some trouble to itself ? (c) Or will some nation prompted by greed invade us in order to capture our markets ? The greed of one party will not suffice by itself for this purpose any more than one can clap hands with the aid of one hand only. If we are easy-going or luxurious we shall fall a prey to the greed of our neighbours. But we shall not then be non-violent either. (d) Or will an invasion be planned because of complications arising from the interests of foreigners living along with us on our frontiers ? In that case, even if it were impossible for a nation which practises merely the non-violence of the weak to

find a solution agreeable to both parties, why should this be beyond the powers of a nation which possesses non-violence of the brave ?

And even granting that finally things have developed to such a pitch as to lead to war, why should a nation receive less protection under non-violence, in which there are brave men who are willing to undergo suffering even unto death, than the protection afforded to nations through violence ?

58. *Lack of stamina, a sign of weak non-violence.*

The truth is that doubt as to whether a nation which has become non-violent can endure is due to lack of imagination. In fact, those who are engaged in violent warfare do not have to undergo less suffering than those who have adopted non-violence. Psychology will not admit that as compared with the gains accruing from the sacrifices offered on the altar of violence, the gains accruing from the same sacrifices undertaken for the sake of non-violence, taking readiness for such sacrifice for granted, will be any less. It is weak non-violence that imagines that very great sacrifices should be made for violence, and little or no sacrifice at all for non-violence. It is certain that such a non-violence cannot hold its own in this world.



59. *A non-violent order free from fear of external aggression and of internal disorder.*

The fear of external aggression and internal disorder haunts us all the time. As a non-violent state is pledged to secure happiness for all, it will not be afflicted by this fear. In spite of the existence of a State which looks after everyone and maintains an atmosphere of mutual non-opposition between them, and in spite of there being facilities in it for removing the difficulties of everyone, if some individuals are bent on causing riot and disorder, it should not be very great problem to meet such a situation. A non-violent order implies the existence of public spirited workers who will from day to day serve the people in their neighbourhood and be in intimate touch with them all. If everywhere there is a band of such workers, it would be quite easy, in case of a riot breaking out in one place, to quell it with readiness on their part for a little sacrifice. When the rioters see that those who have been serving them and who are their brothers well-known to them are ready to die opposing them, and when they find that they are assured that no harm will befall them and that all their grievances will be readily heard, they will be easily quietened.

60. *In an ideal non-violent order there will be no police but only a band of public spirited workers.*

People ask whether in a non-violent State if there is no army there will be at least a police force. Those who reply say that there will be police but of a somewhat different kind. But why not say in other words that there will be no police, but only an alert band of public spirited workers, as well as citizens, who are conscious of their own duties ? Such a reply is not given because these questions and answers do not relate to the ideal State but to the stage which we have reached at present on the way to non-violence, and to the utmost we are able to imagine on the basis of conditions now prevailing.

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